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ABSTRACT

This module contains speaking assignments for high school students that are taken from six different career areas. Each career section begins with a brief introduction to the career and a communications profile of the person interviewed. These pages can be copied and given to students as handouts. Each section also contains some assignments intended to be given individually to students and other intended for groups. Some short activities conclude the section. The activities contained in this module are intended for use as supplemental material in high school speech or applied communications classes. Career areas included are as follows: banking, real estate, retail business/service--cosmetology, engineering technician/utilities, machine operator--textiles, and medical laboratory technician. (YLB)

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THINK SPEAK SUCCEED

...applied oral communications activities for high school students

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Think Speak Succeed!

...applied oral communications activities for high school students

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Introduction

Samuel Johnson once said, "As gold which he cannot spend will make no man rich, so knowledge which he cannot apply will make no man wise." As a teacher, you know that the key to real learning is a student's ability to understand how the skills and content that you are presenting will fit into his or her life. If a student recognizes that skills learned in the classroom will be necessary for success in the workplace and the community, that student is more likely to be motivated to learn.

Think, Speak, Succeed! is designed on the premise that communications skills are easier to learn and more meaningful to students when placed in the context of "real life" communications situations. This module contains speaking assignments taken from six different career areas. Each section contains some assignments intended to be given individually to students and others intended for groups. Also included in each career section is a brief introduction to the career and a communications profile of the person interviewed. These pages can be copied and given to students as handouts.

Career areas included in this module are

- Banking
- Real Estate
- Manufacturing (textiles)
- Utilities
- Medical
- Retail/Service (cosmetology)

It is suggested that the activities contained in this module be used as supplemental material in high school speech or applied communication classes. These materials are being pilot-tested during the 1992-93 school year by Mr. Keith Timms, speech instructor, at Crescent High School in Iva, SC. Revisions to the activities, as well as additions to the career areas, will be completed prior to the 1993-94 school year.

Banking

Introduction

Employees in the banking industry find that good communications skills are vital to their success. Most bank employees, of course, work with the public daily, so they must be able to interact courteously with their customers. When customers enquire about banking services, after all, they are entrusting their money to the bank. They need to feel that they can trust the bank to take good care of their money, so employees must present a competent, honest image to customers.

Another way that bank employees serve their customers is to make them aware of special services that are available to some groups. For example, most banks offer special packages of services to senior citizens; some offer customized services for businesses or for investors. Employees must be comfortable presenting information about what their bank has to offer to individuals or groups.

However, not only do bank employees need good communications skills to interact with customers one on one, but they may be called on from time to time to do presentations to larger groups in the community. The banking industry is extremely involved in community service activities, from fundraising to recruiting volunteers as well as volunteering their own time and services for charitable causes. Bank employees are required by law and by their employers to be active in the community, so they need to be comfortable serving on committees and speaking in both formal and informal situations.

Communications Profile

...Melissa Perkins, Loan Officer

"When you work at a job where you might have to ruin someone's day by saying 'No,' you had better be a great communicator!" Melissa Perkins, a loan officer for Nationsbank, says that her good communications skills got her the promotion from teller to loan officer. "I am taking business classes to pursue my associate's degree as well, but I know that my ability to listen to customers and explain bank procedures and policies to them really helped me get this job." In banking, she explained, the customer is the top consideration in every decision and task. "As a teller, I had to learn to cope with customers who were sometimes impatient or hurried because they were on their lunch hour or just had other things to do and didn't want to wait in line. There were lots of times that I did not feel like smiling and being friendly, but it was a very important part of my job to welcome people. It is still an important part of my job, because people are often nervous about applying for a loan. I think any time you know that you might get turned down, you are a little nervous. Also, a lot of people don't really know much about the process of getting a loan, so I have to educate them, too." One part of Melissa's job that she enjoys is community service. "I like going into elementary schools and talking to young children about the bank, and it's fun when classes come to visit the bank. I also enjoy the opportunity to work with charitable agencies as part of my job. We are really encouraged to get involved in the community and contribute something."

Activities

Group

You and three of your classmates are employees at a branch of the Palmetto Bank in Palmetto City, SC. You have noticed that the other bank in town, your main competitor, has recently added Saturday morning banking hours from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Although you know that a similar move on your part would add some extra working hours for your staff, you have heard numerous comments and suggestions from friends and customers indicating that Palmetto Bank should add those hours to its regular operating schedule.

The staff has informally discussed the idea among themselves, and given the competitive nature of the banking industry, you think it would be a good idea to add the hours. You are especially concerned because the other bank seems to be growing faster than PB. You and the other staff members (your classmates) have decided that the next step is to make a presentation to your branch manager. You will need to

1. **Choose individual roles.** Each of you will role play a staff member in the bank. Remember, the rest of the class represents the branch manager. Make your presentation to them as if you were speaking to her.

2. **Brainstorm together what information you need to present to your manager.** Anticipate what questions she would likely have, and then you will need to create a plan to present to her that will answer her questions.

3. **Make an outline of your overall presentation;** then divide the parts so that each of you will make a short (about 5 minutes) individual presentation.

4. **As always, remember the visual element.** You may want to dress like bank employees, and consider preparing posters, handouts, surveys, etc. that you think would be convincing.

Individual

You are the manager of a branch of Palmetto Bank in Palmetto City, SC. You have been asked to speak to a group of senior citizens at a local retirement community about the possibility of putting an automatic teller machine on their premises. They are listening to presentations by other banks as well, particularly the other major bank in town, your main competitor. You need to convince the group that your bank is the best choice. You will need to

1. **Do some research by visiting local banks and collecting relevant information.** What services do they offer senior citizens? Do some banks offer more than others, or are their services similar?

2. **Now do more research by interviewing a senior citizen (or two).** Is he or she happy with what local banks have to offer? What banking needs does the typical senior citizen have? What concerns and questions seem to be important to this group?

3. **Now that you have done some research, consider this question: Do you think that the services being offered are sufficient?** Can you think of any not currently offered that your (hypothetical) bank might include? Should any existing services be changed?

4. **Now you are ready to design your presentation.** You might decide that your bank will offer what is basically the standard package, but remember that you are in a competitive situation here, and you want to convince your audience that you bank is the better choice. To be convincing, you must show them the benefits to choosing you.

5. **Again, remember the visual element.** Visuals like posters or bro chures always make a presentation more interesting. Also consider how you dress. And be prepared for questions!

Individual

Although many high school students work part-time during the school year or at least during the summer, they may still be unfamiliar with the banking services offered locally. Many may already have checking or savings accounts, but how many understand the terms often used on television or in advertisements like CD or IRA? How many of your classmates know what is involved in applying for a loan. Your purpose for this informative speech is to help your audience (your classmates) understand the banking terms and services that are unfamiliar to them. First, you will need to do some research:

1. **Ask your classmates what banking services are already familiar to them.** Do many of them already have bank accounts? What questions do they have and what would they like to know more about? What are their financial goals?

2. **After you have a good understanding of the needs of your audience, then visit some local banks.** What services do they offer you and your classmates? Do any offer special services for students? Make an appointment to talk with a branch manager or loan officer, and find out about those areas that interested your classmates.

3. **Now you can design your presentation.** Remember that your purpose is to inform your audience, not to persuade them to choose any particular bank. Keep in mind the information they were most interested in knowing more about, and be ready to answer questions. Also, since this is infomation you hope they will remember, use an appropriate visual aid to help them remember.

Short Exercises

1. Role play one of the following situations:

    a. One of the employees at your small branch bank is going through a hard time right now because her father is seriously ill. You (the rest of the staff) are all aware of the situation, and you want to help her through this difficult time. However, the problem is that she is becoming more and more distracted at work, making computation errors and forgetting what customers have asked for. You need to talk with her about the problem. how will you handle it?

    b. One group member will role play a loan officer who must turn down a loan application for a customer who has been a very steady customer at the bank for a number of years. After looking at his financial report, you have determined that he has too much debt right now to take on another loan. You know that he will be angry because he has been such a good customer and expects to get this loan easily. How will you handle this situation so that you say no but keep the customer?

2. Design a commercial for your bank using bank employees and customers.

Real Estate

Introduction

Real estate agents are an important part of any community. They are often the first representatives of a community that a person moving into an area will meet. Therefore, they must know a great deal about their area and be able to make a good first impression. In addition, because they are involved in sales, real estate sales associates must build a reputation for honesty and competence in order to be successful in this highly competitive field.

A sales career of any kind requires that an individual be confident, knowledgeable and self-motivated. However, a good salesperson is also an excellent communicator. This is especially true of real estate sales associates, who must work effectively with both buyers and sellers, bankers, lawyers and other real estate agents. All of these people have a part to play in the selling/buying process, and the sales associate must be able to coordinate all of their efforts in order for a successful sale to take place.

Sales is all about persuasion and persuasive techniques. However, it is also all about understanding your customers and what they want. Listening is a crucial skill for a successful salesperson because he or she must be able to match the customer with the right piece of property. The customer's lifestyle, values, likes and dislikes--all must be analyzed and understood by the salesperson.

However, no matter how important persuasive techniques may be to the selling process, good interpersonal skills are critical. People who are buying or selling property are involved in transactions worth thousands of dollars, so they are typically under a good deal of stress. It is up to the salesperson to reassure buyers and sellers. He or she must be very knowledgeable about all details involved but must also be able to build an atmosphere during the process that will help everyone feel comfortable and relaxed.

Communications Profile

...Teresa Jones, Real Estate Sales Associate

"If people don't trust me, they certainly are not going to let me sell their house!" Teresa Jones has been selling real estate for thirteen years, and she says most of her success comes from good communications skills. "Selling anything is all about gaining the buyer's trust, and building your own credibility. I have been able to do this through the simple skills of listening carefully and communicating openly and honestly." Through the years, as a sales associate with Carolina Realty in Clemson, South Carolina, Teresa has proven her effectiveness through numerous awards and recogition as a Life Member of the Tri-County Board of Realtors Million Dollar Club. "I can't tell you how much I have learned over the years about talking to people, putting them at ease, and really listening to what they are saying. I have to be able to ask the right questions, too, about their plans for the future, their lifestyles and their expectations. Often, I work with people who know very little about the process of buying and selling property, and I have to be the one to educate them in the details. Sometimes people come to me with all kinds of misconceptions and I have to carefully help them understand the reality of the process and what they can and can't do." In the process of buying and selling property, Teresa said, she must work with people in all kinds of income brackets and employment areas. "I could be working with a young couple trying to find that first house, or I could be trying to sell an expensive home to the CEO of a corporation. I have to be able to communicate and get along with everyone. I also work regularly with lawyers, bankers, other sales associate, appraisers, inspectors--you name it! I can honestly say to anyone interested in entering this field that you have to like people--all kinds of people!"

Activities

Group

A development corporation in your area is building a new subdivision on the lake. They have advertised that the homes will not be the larger, more exclusive and expensive properties that are typically built in that kind of setting. They intend to keep the price reasonable and affordable, in the $80,000-110,000 range. Your real estate company, Palmetto Realty, would very much like to represent the corporation and be the agents who sell these properties. You are sure that this will be a popular subdivision and that you would have no difficulty selling the homes quickly. However, every realty company in town also wants this opportunity. You are going to have to be very competitive and persuasive to convince the developers that your company should be the one to sell their properties. Your group (the sales associates and real estate broker for Palmetto Realty) will make a short presentation to Shoreline Development Corporation to make your case. You will need to

1. **Do some research first.** Talk to a realtor and find out what kinds of information you would need to present. What would the corporation need and want to know about your company? What criteria would they probably have? What kinds of experience would be most valuable from their point of view?

2. **Now that you have interviewed at least one realtor and have some ideas about the information you will need to present, get together with your group and share information you have all gathered.** Brainstorm together about the content of your presentation and the roles you will play individually. You will each need to make a short individual presentation.

3. **As you design and practice your presentation, don't forget visual aids to make it more interesting and convincing.**

Individual

Sometimes realtors act almost as 'tour guides" for their communities. They must know all about their area and what will appeal to people moving in. They must also be persuasive about why families should want to move into their community in preference to other communities nearby. How much do you know about your community? Could you convince someone to move into your town or city? Could you answer their questions?

For this presentation, you will role play a local realtor. You are talking with two families who will be transferred into this area in two months to work for a manufacturing company that has built a new plant here. You need to talk to these families about your community and convince them to move there instead of to a neighboring community.

First you will need to brainstorm. What would these families want to know? What would be their main concerns and questions? What would be most and least important to them in a community?

Now do some research. Make sure you can answer any questions. You may need to get some information from the chamber of commerce, interview some local business people or local residents, etc. Be thorough!

As you design and practice your presentation, anticipate questions and be able to answer them. Don't forget to include a visual aid to make your presentation interesting.

Individual

Within the next 5 - 10 years, you and your classmates will be finishing your college education, beginning a career, possibly getting married, and buying your first house. But how much do you know about the process involved in buying a house and the financial commitment involved? So you and your classmates will have a better understanding of what is involved in buying a house, you will interview an adult you know who owns a house. It can be anyone: a parent or another relative, a friend, a neighbor, a teacher, etc. Ask the person you have chosen to interview the following questions, and then report on your findings to the class.

1. How long have you owned the house you have now?

2. How many houses have you owned?

3. Approximately how much money would your house sell for? Has it increased in value since you bought it?

4. Do you have a mortgage? How many years do you have left to pay it off?

5. How long do you plan to live in this house? Do you have any plans to sell it?

6. If so, what kind of house would you like to buy next?

7. Do you think it is better to own a house or rent one? Why?

8. Do you think it is easier today to buy a house than it was when you first bought one, or do you think it is harder? Why?

9. What advice would you give someone who is buying his or her first house?

Remember, don't just read these questions and answers to the class; take the comments and answers you got in the interview, and give the class a summary of the conversation, being careful to bring out the important details.

Short Activities

1. Role play one of the following situations:

   a. One of your neighbors is getting ready to sell her house, and you are certain you could sell it for her quickly. In fact, you know a couple looking for a house in your neighborhood that you feel certain would be interested. Your neighbor, however, has said that she prefers to sell the house herself and save the commission she would pay a realtor. Talk her into letting you sell her house.

   b. You are interviewing with a real estate broker, who owns a successful company, to be accepted as a trainee. What qualities do you think would make a successful trainee? Convince her that you would be a suitable candidate.

2. Create a "commercial" for your real estate company using employees and satisfied customers.

Retail Business/ Cosmetology

Introduction

Watch television for an hour at almost any time of the day or night, and you are guaranteed to see at least one commercial dedicated to hair care. In our society, we are all quite focussed on how we look and whether we feel that we look our best. The way our hair is styled and cut, then, can play a major part in how we feel about ourselves. Of course, our appearance is a very personal concern for each of us, and we are vulnerable to the people to the people we pay to make us look better. If you don't agree, think back to the time you had a haircut or permanent you hated!

Cosmetologists (sometimes called **stylists**) know how important looking good and feeling good about themselves is to their clients. In order to serve their clients well, good stylists spend time getting to know their clients so they will understand their clients' lifestyles and values. Naturally, good communications skills are the key to this process. In one day, the typical stylist could be cutting the hair of a six-year-old boy, a busy and sophisticated career woman, and an elderly retiree. That stylist must be able to make each one feel comfortable, gain his or her trust, and understand what kind of hairstyle each one has in mind.

Observation is a very important component of this communications process--if someone is dressed fairly conservatively, he or she is probably not a good candidate for a radical or trendy style. So the good stylist must play amateur psychologist to discover what style will best suit a customer and make him or her happy, but good listening skills are critical to making the right choice.

Good interpersonal skills--listening, observing, building credibility, setting an open and comfortable tone--are so important to a cosmetologist's success that it is not too extreme to say that the stylist who has very good haircutting and styling skills but who cannot "connect" with people is very unlikely to be successful in this field.

Communications Profile

...Dawn Tabor, Owner, Alexandra Station Salon

"No one could ever be successful in this business without good listening skills. I listen very carefully to what my customers are saying, and even more important, I listen to what they're not saying. I have to be able to interpret what they really want so they will be satisfied and will look the way they want to look." After six years as a very successful stylist in Clemson, South Carolina, Dawn recently decided to open her own shop. "I had built up an extremely good, loyal clientele over the years, and it was time for me to do something different. I originally thought that I would do this kind of work just temporarily and eventually go to a four-year college for a degree in education. I went to a two-year college and completed my Associate's degree, but when I came to the point of going on, I stopped and thought long and hard. I realized that I am already happy and successful in what I am doing, and I was just going on for another degree because I thought I had to do that to be successful. Instead, I decided to take the plunge and open my own shop. It has been great!" Communications skills, says Dawn, play a very important role in her job. Besides good listening skills, she must be able to be a friend to all of her customers, and she must be able to make them comfortable. " I work with all types of people, and all ages, so I really have to be able to make them feel at ease and trust me. Sometimes I think that what I do is really a team effort between me and my customers. I have the technical skills they need, but we really have to be able to work together so they will be happy with the result."

Activities

Group

You and your group members are the owner and employees of "Minnie's Cut and Curl" in Palmetto City, SC. You have had a very successful year; so successful, in fact, that you feel you are ready to expand your facilities. You would like to be able to offer a full line of services like manicures, pedicures, makeovers, etc. However, your current facilities are a little cramped already. You need to move into a new building, but you hate to give up your good location. You are right downtown, and a good number of your clients are able to come in during their lunch hour or right after work.

You think that you have found the best solution to your dilemma, but you will have to get some help from the city council. One block from your current location is a building that has, until now, been approved only for residential use. It is a turn-of-the-century two-story house that has been converted into apartments. The owner is now trying to sell the building, and you feel that it would be ideal for your needs. It is located right between a residential neighborhood, and a business section, though, so you will need for the city council to approve a change in the zoning of the building to permit you to locate your business there.

You and the members of your group will need to brainstorm together to fill in the details about Minnie's Cut and Curl. Each of you needs to take a role as an employee or the owner, and you will each make a short presentation to the city council (the rest of the class). Keep in mind that your purpose is to persuade them to rezone the building. Brainstorm what concerns or questions they might have, and be ready with answers for those questions. Treat this as "real life" as possible--you may want to dress the part, have a drawing of your plans for the new building, have the results of a survey from the neighbors in the area saying that they support the change, etc.

Individual

For this presentation, you will role play a cosmetologist who plans to open his or her own shop. First, though, you must obtain a sizeable loan from the bank in order to lease the property, renovate, paint and carpet, buy the necessary furnishings and equipment. In order to convince the bank to lend you the necessary sum, approximately $80,000, you must present your plan to the bank loan officer. He or she will want to know how you plan to spend the money, so you need to have a detailed list of costs as well as a plan for your shop--how it will look, where it will be, how many people you will hire, what you will name it, why you think it will be successful, etc. After you draw up your plan, present it to your classmates, who represent the bank loan officer. You will need to

1. **Brainstorm the details** you can fill in yourself like the size of the shop, the name, location, etc.

2. **Do some research** by visiting or calling a local salon to find out what kinds of equipment and supplies you would need to purchase in order to open a shop.

3. **Design your plan**, keeping in mind that it should look professional and convincing. Be as realistic as possible. Remember, your classmates may ask questions, so be as prepared as possible with the details. As always, don't forget to have your visual prepared!

Individual

Hair stylists spend most of their time cutting, styling, and coloring hair, giving permanents and other similar services. However, they must also be prepared to answer questions about hair care that are health-related. Stylists must keep up-to-date on the latest styles and the latest hair care information by taking courses every year to maintain their certification. There are numerous topics that link hair and general health. Below is a partial listing of some of those topics. Choose one of the topics or come up with a similar one of your own, and report briefly (approximately 5 minutes) to the class. Remember, your purpose is to inform the class, not to persuade them to take any particular action. Here are some topics to choose from:

Pattern baldness in men
Pattern baldness in women
Stress and hair loss
Vitamins and healthy hair
How hair grows
Effects of coloring on hair
Scalp-related diseases

Short Activities

1. Role play one of the following situations:

   a. You are a stylist in a popular salon. A depressed-looking young woman, very conservatively dressed, has come in asking you to cut her hair. She tells you that her fiance just dumped her, and she thinks it is time to make a change. Her hair, which she has never cut short, is very long--almost waist length. Now she is telling you to cut it into a radically short cut, almost a "buzz." How will you handle the situation?

   b. You have spent several hours working with one client, a middle-aged man who cannot seem to make up his mind about what he wants. He finally decided that he wanted a perm. You warned him that it might be very curly at first, but he wanted to try it anyway. You gave him the perm, and now he hates it. How will you handle this situation?

2. Design a commercial for your styling salon using the employees and some satisfied customers.

Engineering Technician/ Utilities

Introduction

An engineering technician working in the utilities industry plays one of the most important roles in the power plant. He or she is responsible for the operation of complex computerized machinery and processes. The engineering technician is responsible to maintain and repair that machinery, to create and follow technical procedures, to run specified tests, and to work closely with engineers and other plant personnel in order to gauge the effectiveness of current procedures and processes. The technician must have very specific technical skills and the appropriate education (usually a two-year degree from a technical college), but must also be able to count on excellent communica tionsskills. Listening skills are critical--in order to be able to follow complicated technical procedures, he or she must first understand them correctly.

Another critical communications skill for the technician is the ability to work on a team. Many companies in this industry are relying more and more on teams of employees to take initiative and responsibility for decisionmaking and problem-solving. Therefore, the technician must be able to confidently express an opinion or a suggestion and be able to present logical reasoning to support it. However, he or she must also be able to compromise, listen actively to others, and contribute to a group solution or decision.

A major concern in the power industry is safety, and technicians are trained rigorously in procedures that are concerned with their safety and the safety of others on the job. Often, they attend regular safety meetings, and in many cases they are expected to lead these meetings, presenting information to their coworkers. Therefore, they must feel comfortable presenting to a group.

Most people, when they think of engineering technicians, think only about the highly technical information and machinery with which they work. However, clearly the communications skills of the technician are just as important as the technical skills.

Communications Profile

...Walt Williams, Training

"There is no doubt in my mind that I am in this job primarily because of my reading, listening, speaking and writing skills. There were other technicians who had as much technical experience as I had, but I was really working on my communications skills, and I learned from the beginning of my career how important those skills were." After over ten years as an engineering technician with Duke Power, Walt Williams recently was promoted to the Training Division. Now he works with new employees and current employees to train them in new processes and procedures, and to help them upgrade their skills. "As a technician, I had to work with other employees at all levels, so it was important that I had good interpersonal skills like listening and being friendly. I also had to follow very detailed procedures, so reading and asking the right questions were very important too. If you are trying to fill out a report on machinery that isn't working, you had better be able to give the details, or it won't be repaired correctly." Another important consideration when he was a technician and now as a trainer, said Walt, is safety. "Duke Power places a strong empha sis on safety. Technicians and other employees are involved in regular safety meetings, and they are sometimes asked to lead those meetings and make a presentation on a safety-related topic." Now as a trainer, Walt is interested in continuing to work on his own communications skills as well as building the communications skills of other employees. "We all need to be able to work together effectively on committees and in teams. The better we can communicate, the better we can anticipate and solve problems. It doesn't do anyone much good to have a great idea and not be able to explain it to his or her coworkers."

Activities

Group

Your group will role play a group of employees at the Palmetto City Nuclear Power Station. The station manager has created several work groups of employees from all across the plant to come up with some solutions to problems that have been identified through employee complaints and suggestion boxes. Your work group has been assigned the problem of complaints about the plant lunchroom. (Does this sound like a familiar problem, i.e. the school cafeteria?) Specifically, employees have not complained so much about the quality of the food, but about the variety. There is available a hot lunch that is the usual lunchroom meal--a meat, two vegetables, bread and dessert. There is also available a grill where employees can order hamburgers and other grilled sandwiches, and there are a few cold sandwiches available. Employees have specifically complained that besides being tired of the same menu over and over, there is nothing available for people who are trying to watch their weight or their cholesterol. Your group has been charged with the responsibility of looking at the com plaints, brainstorming together, and recommending a couple of options to the plant management. You need to

1. **Take the roles of employees inside the plant.** You might choose to be a clerical worker, a department manager, an engineer, an engineering technician, a maintenance worker, a lunchroom worker,etc.

2. **Brainstorm together what kinds of concerns employees would have and what kinds of solutions are most likely to be realistic.**

3. **Brainstorm together what concerns the plant management is most likely to have, and what kinds of solutions would be most acceptable to them.**

4. **Decide what options to recommend.**

5. **Design your presentation,** keeping in mind that everyone in the group should speak briefly, and don't forget to use a visual aid!

Individual

Engineering technicians often are asked to train new employees or explain to other people just what they do. Have you ever tried to teach someone how to do something? Have you ever tried to learn how to do something or followed someone else's directions and had some difficulty? On the job, being able to quickly and clearly train someone to do a task correctly is a very important skill. Just as important is the skill of being able to explain clearly how a procedure works or how a mechanical process works. To practice these skills, choose one of these exercises:

1. Teach your classmates how to do something that you know how to do well. It could be a hobby, something you do as part of a job, or it could be a little more general, like tips for how to study effectively. Keep in mind if you choose this option how important good visual aids are (and be sure that you have read chapter chapter 15 in your textbook).

2. Interview an adult to find out how some procedure or some mechanical process works. For instance, you could interview a policeman to find out the steps someone is taken through when he or she is arrested; you could interview a guidance counselor to find out how registration works; you could interview your mom, dad, or some other adult to find out how to get a job or how a process or procedure works at his or her workplace. Then report to the class on what you have discovered.

Individual

Engineering technicians are frequently required to participate in safety meetings to learn about safe attitudes and behaviors. Companies lose a great deal of productive time and money when employees are absent from work because of accidents. Also, in the utilities industry, employees are constantly working with or around potentially hazardous substances. It is extremely important that they make safety their first priority. To give you some practice in expanding your knowledge of safety issues and to encourage safe behaviors, you will do research on one of the following topics (or another similar topic) and report on it to the class:

Wearing seatbelts
Keeping children in carseats
Smoking
Dangerous chemicals in the home
Fire prevention
Drinking and driving
Tool safety
Preventing sports-related injuries
Defensive driving strategies

Short Activities

1. Role play one of the following situations:

   a. Another technician who works in the area next to yours has not been on the job very long. You have noticed that she is having some trouble being organized, and she has a tendency to keep her area rather messy. She leaves tools out; rags are on the floor; empty drink cans are lying around. You know that she is creating safety hazards by being so messy. How will you handle the situation?

   b. You are new on the job and still learning your way around. This morning you learned the maintenance procedures for the electronics system in an important machine. However, your supervisor, who is a little impatient, went through the procedures very quickly, and now that you need to perform them, you aren't sure about one or two points. How will you handle this situation?

2. Create a commercial for your company using employees and satisfied customers.

Machine Operator/ Textiles

Introduction

Textile machine operators, or "associates," as they are often called, are responsible to transform fibers into textile products. These products can include clothing, carpeting, and fabrics used on furniture. The various stages of fabric development require different types of operators who specialize in one part of the production process. Their titles include

bleachers, who dye or bleach yarn wound on beams, tubes, or coils;

operators and tenders, who operate machines that spin fibers into yarn;

setters and setup operators, who prepare and repair machines used by operators and tenders; and

bonding setters, who set up and run machines that bond, stretch and apply finishes to thread.

Because operators are an important part of the textile manufacturing process, communications skills are crucial to them. They must carefully follow established procedures and safety precautions, so listening skills are very important. Operators also meet regularly as members of "quality circles," groups of employees who review the work that is being done to determine what they might be doing better and to solve any problems that have come up. This team approach to management also requires that operators be able to be flexible and learn new skills quickly so that they can become familiar with all aspects of the manufacturing process and rotate through the plant. They must therefore be able to have good interpersonal communications skills in order to work successfully with different people throughout the plant.

Communications Profile

...John Boozer, Electrical Technician

"If the company is prepared to trust me to maintain millions of dollars worth of equipment, I had better get it right the first time." John Boozer, a student in electronics engineering technology, will finish his associate's degree in June 1993, but he is already employed in his field. Though he has been working only a few months for Springs Industries, he already knows the value of good speaking and listening skills. "I have to check in with the plant engineer when I start work, and he will tell me what to look for--sometimes they have been having consistent problems with certain machinery or equipment. But I also depend heavily on operators to describe the problems they have been having. I have to listen very closely to get the details, and I have to ask the right questions as well. I almost feel like a doctor; if I don't understand the 'symptoms' of the problem, I might not use the right 'treatment'!" John troubleshoots a variety of equipment including looms, heating and cooling systems, winders, and spinners. Because this machinery performs the most critical tasks in the textile manufacturing process, it must be kept in good working order. If not, the product can be defective, or valuable time can be lost. Another important consideration of John's job is safety. "We talk constantly about how to keep our work areas safe and how to avoid accidents at the plant. Accidents not only cost people time, but they can cost the company a lot of money. We have a safety committee here at work that looks into potentially hazardous situations and makes recommendations to plant management. I look forward to being on that committee when I have more experience. I know that the more I learn about safety, the better." One of the newest trends in manufacturing is the concept of team problem-solving, and John is gaining experience in this area,too. "It all goes back to the idea that 'two heads are better than one.' We help each other out to solve problems with machinery and suggest how to fix them. Working together we can save a lot of time and do the job better."

Activities

Group

Your quality circle, which meets every morning before you begin work, has been discussing a problem that you are having with one of the older looms. It is breaking down almost every day and consistently producing fabric with streaks caused by missing or broken threads. You know that economically, times are rather tight, and the company may not feel that they have the money to buy a new loom right now. However, the members of your quality circle have discussed this problem for several days, and you all agree that the most economical solution would be for the company to purchase a new loom or at least to stop operating this old one long enough to rebuild it. Your group has decided to make a presentation to plant management recommending the two options and indicating a preference for the purchase of a new loom. You will need to

1. **Each take a role as an employee in the company.** Remember, quality circles have employees on all levels, so someone can role play a manager, another an operator, another an engineer, etc.

2. **Brainstorm** how to convince management that a problem exists and that your solutions are good ones. Remember to consider the loss of productivity that is caused when the loom is being repaired, what that is costing the company, what the defective material is costing, etc.

3. **Brainstorm** management's possible objections, and be ready for them with answers.

4. **Design your presentation** with each group member making a brief individual presentation. Don't forget the visual aid!

Individual

As an operator in a textile production plant,you have been asked to talk to a group of elementary school children about textiles and why they are important to our everyday lives. In this area, there are numerous textile manufacturing plants that make very different kinds of products. For example, the Clark-Schwebel plant in Anderson makes a product called Kevlar, a high-technology fiberglass cloth that is used on the nosecone of the space shuttle, in bullet-proof vests, and in sails for sailboats. Other textile plants, like the Gerrish-Milliken plant in Pendleton, manufacture more traditional fabrics that can be made into sheets or draperies. Below is a list of the textile manufacturing plants in Anderson County. Do some research by calling the main office of some of these plants or talking to someone who works at one of them. When you feel that you have a good representative sampling of what kinds of products are created in our area textile manufacturing plants, plan a presentation that you could give to elementary school students. Be sure to use plenty of visuals to help them to understand the kinds of products that are made in this area that they use every day.

Anderson Twisting Inc.	287-3231
BASF Fibers	260-7000
Baychem, Inc.	224-3551
Belton Industries	338-5711
Blair Mills	338-6611
Carolina Creations	338-6932
Culp Woven Velvets	226-2857
Cushman Mill	847-7301
Gerber's	947-6241
Glen Raven	224-1671
Hampshire Designers	225-6232
Honea Path Mill	369-0527
Iva Manufacturing	348-6151
Jackson Mills	348-6116
Karastan-Bigelow	338-7731
La France	646-3213
Mayfair Mills	352-6123
Peerless Mill	338-7711

Individual

Textile plants have changed a great deal since the times depicted in the movie "Norma Rae," which depicted deplorable, unsafe working conditions for textile workers. As a result of foreign competition and new technology, most textile manufacturing plants are now more automated and computerized, so they are cleaner and more comfortable work environments. Because this industry is such an important one to this area of South Carolina, we all should know more about how it has had an impact on our area. For this exercise you will do some research on a textile-related topic and report on it to class. Below is a partial list of topics you might use to research. You might want to start in the library, but also refer to the list to textile manufacturing plants on the previous page. You might want to call one or more of them and ask them to send you information about their company and their products. Topics:

Trade laws and the textile industry
The history of the textile industry in South Carolina
Cotton as a crop in S.C. and its importance
The effects of foreign competition on the textile industry
The "Buy American" campaign
High-technology developments in textiles
Careers available in textile manufacturing
Textiles and the automobile industry
High-technology textiles
Eli Whitney and other textile innovators in textiles

Medical Laboratory Technician

Short Activities

1. Choose one of the following situations and role play:

   a. You have recently been moved into a new area of the plant to learn to set up and operate a new machine. You have noticed that the operator next to you is taking a lot of breaks that he shouldn't be taking and is generally doing as little as possible. You don't know him well, but his reputation around the plant is not very good, though he may not be aware of that fact. People generally do not think of him as a very good worker, and rumor has it that a layoff may be coming. You decide you will talk to him about the situation. What will you say?

   b. Your quality circle is meeting to talk about procedures to be used to determine who will get a raise and who will not. Role play that meeting.

2. Create a commercial for your company using employees and satisfied customers.

Introduction

The medical laboratory technician (MLT) works in a laboratory (often in a hospital) to conduct laboratory tests requested by physicians on blood or other body substances. Medical lab technicians have trained in rigorous two-year programs that include substantial backgrounds in math and science.

MLT's function as part of a care-giving team, so communicating effectively with other members of the team is critical. Often a doctor's diagnosis and treatment is based on the findings of the tests run by the MLT. Frequently, emergency treatment must wait until lab work has been completed. Therefore, good listening, speaking and teamwork skills must be used. The consequences of incorrect treatment or incorrect tests conducted through misunderstandings could be very serious to the patient.

In addition, as part of hospital or laboratory quality assurance activities, an MLT will frequently be called on to participate in safety inspection teams or other employee groups that work together to suggest improvements or innovations.

Communications Profile

...Lee Gentry, Medical Laboratory Technician

"It didn't take me long to realize that I am part of a team working together to care for the patient, so we all have to be able to communicate with each other clearly if we're going to make sure that patients get the best possible care." Lee Gentry has been a medical laboratory technician at Anderson Memorial Hospital for six years, since graduating from a two-year college with an associate's degree. According to Lee, one of the most important skills an MLT can have is the ability to listen carefully and get the correct facts quickly. "We often have to take information over the telephone, and we frequently are in the position of trying to get results back to a doctor quickly so that he or she can make a decision about treatment." If the communication process breaks down, said Lee, and someone does not give or receive the cor rect information, a patient could receive incorrect or unnecessary treatment. "I really try to think of the doctors and the patients as my customers, and that helps me keep in perspective how important it is for me to communicate with them as well as I can." Medical lab technicians also work closely with each other in laboratories, sharing facilities and equipment, so good interpersonal skills are important as well. "In our hospital," said Lee,"the newest trend is for people to work together in teams to do regular safety inspections and make recommendations. We also work together on committees that are made up of employees from all over the hospital. I serve on a computer users committee with doctors, nurses, and other employees. So it is important for me to be able to work with people on all levels in the hospital."

Activities

Group

You and your group represent a quality assurance team that has been asked to conduct regular safety inspections of the laboratories in the hospital. Some doctors have complained about slow and sometimes incorrect laboratory results. Your group has inspected the laboratory and found the following problems:

1. Eight MLT's trying to enter data on the same computer terminal;

2. Cluttered and crowded workspaces;

3. Technicians working double shifts because of a high turnover rate;

4. Frequent visits by sales representatives;

5. Only one supervisor for 25 lab employees.

Based on your findings, meet as a group, take roles as hospital employees, (some could be MLT's, some doctors, some nurses, ward clerks, etc.), and decide what recommendations you will make to the hospital administration. Make sure each member of your group speaks briefly as part of the overall presentation.

Individual

You are an MLT in a Palmetto City hospital. You have just attended a meeting on safety procedures, and you were especially interested in information that was brought out on how lab technicians can protect themselves against the HIV virus that causes AIDS. You know that your fellow lab technicians at work will want to know this information, so you decide to go to the library, do some research, then report to your fellow employees (your classmates) on what they should do to protect themselves against HIV-infected blood.

Individual

MLT's must work with all kinds of "customers." They must get along with physicians who order tests, with ward clerks or nurses who draw blood, other lab technicians, maintenance staff, and patients. Obviously, they must know how to get along with people from many different kinds of backgrounds and educational levels.

You have been asked to represent your local professional organization at a workshop, speaking on effective communication skills. What suggestions do you have for your fellow MLT's on effective communication strategies? With your classmates as your hypothetical audience, speak for 5 minutes on this topic.

Short Activities

1. Role play one of the following situations:

   a. Through mislabelling of test data, a patient has been given drugs that he did not need. He is fine, but the doctor is furious. You are the supervisor of the MLT who did the test. How will you handle the situation?

   b. One of the physicians orders all of his tests Stat, which means that you and your fellow technicians are required to drop whatever else you might be doing and run his tests. You feel sure that he does not always require this kind of priority treatment. You have decided to talk with your supervisor about the problem.

2. Do a commercial for your hospital using employees and satisfied customers.